(b) whether Government propose to exploit these blocks for exploration and production of oil;

(c) whether the question of withdrawing the notification has been taken up with the State Government of Gujarat and if so, with what result;

(d) whether Govenrment propose to offer these blocks to the competitive bidders; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (e) The Government of Gujarat, through three notifications issued during February 1994—August, 1997, reserved certain Coal/lignite bearing areas in Gujarat for exploration and production of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Pursuant to the approval of CBM Policy by the Government of India, as required under Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 1959, consultations with State including Gujarat having CBM prospects, were initiated. The Government of Gujarat was requested to give its concurrence to the CBM Policy and also to withdraw these notifications. Though, the Government of Gujarat has concurred to the CBM Policy, the notifications have not been withdrawn.

Identification and offer of CBM blocks on an all India basis to the competitive bidders is an ongoing process.

Disinvestment of BPCL and other petroleum companies

3181. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Panna-Mukta Refinery project has been abandoned by Government;

(b) if so, the details therefor;

(c) whether any proposal is under the consideration of Government to disinvest more BPCL and other public sector petroleum company equities to private sector industry; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) There is no proposal to set up a refinery at "Panna-Mukta" site or by this name.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Government have decided to disinvest 33.58% of the equity in IBP Company Limited to a strategic investor.

Upgradation of petrol stations by Oil Companies

3182. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state the efforts made by public sector oil companies to upgrade the petrol stations, in order to compete with private dealers like Reliance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): In order to face the competition from the Private Sector Oil Companies in the liberalised scenario, the Public Sector Oil Companies have taken various steps, including the following, to upgrade facilities in their retail outlets:—

(i) Ensuring availability of basic facilities such as free air, drinking water, toilets, etc.

(ii) Giving a facelift to the retail outlets by providing better illumination through improved yard lighting, improving the driveways, providing canopies with backlit facia, false ceilings, lighting, etc.

(iii) Provision of value-added facilities at selected retail outlets for improved customer services such as Convenience Stores, ATMs, Cyber Cafes, etc.

(iv) Selective installation of multi-product pumps, pre-mix pumps and digital air inflators.

(v) Implementation of quality and quantity assurance scheme.

(vi) Intensive Training Programme for Company Officers and dealers.